

# CONNECTICUT MARINE TRADES ASSOCIATION

20 Plains Road  
Essex, CT 06475-1501

(860) 767-2645 • Fax (860) 767-3559 • e-mail [cmta@snet.net](mailto:cmta@snet.net)

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March 5, 2014

Transportation Committee  
Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

**Re: Senate Joint Resolution No. 23 Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution Limiting the Use of Moneys Contained in the Special Transportation Fund.**

Chairmen Maynard and Guerrera, Senator Boucher, Representative Scribner and Distinguished Members.

The Connecticut Marine Trades Association (CMTA) and our 340 member businesses urge you to carefully consider the wording of **Senate Joint Resolution No. 23 Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution Limiting the Use of Moneys Contained in the Special Transportation Fund**. It is common knowledge that the Special Transportation Fund has been used to fund many projects and initiatives both transportation oriented and many with no connection to transportation. This resolution is a start to protect moneys in the Fund from being diverted for alternate uses.

Historically Recreational Boating Funds, collected from registration fees, federal budget distributions and others that are primarily designed or used to support recreational boating, were and now are frequently deposited into the Special Transportation Fund, STF. It is important to recreational boating that, maintenance of statewide facilities like launching ramps, transient dockage facilities, small harbor and fairway dredging projects, and the like, do not get co-mingled with general transportation funds. If they do, it very well may be impossible to then separate them for their actual use. Recreational boating has, for the most part, supported itself through vessel registration fees. A good portion of those fees historically would be distributed back to municipalities to be used by them at their waterfronts. The balance of the fees went to DEEP to support the Boating Division. With the demise of the Boating Fund all those supporting fees have been diverted into the General Fund. Fuel taxes generated at waterfront points of sale (marinas) now go to the STF with no benefits to boating or to the waterfront.

We would strongly suggest that the Boating Fund be restarted and vessel registration fees, federal marine and boating funding and fuel taxes generated at the waterfront be kept in the reinstated Boating Fund to support works and repairs to the recreational marine infrastructure, DEEP's administration of the Safe Boating Program, and support of the Boating Division in general. Should additional funding allow, a return to distributing a portion back to municipalities as a pilot to those municipalities that can show their active support for the marine industry with educational or enforcement programs.

We urge you again to carefully consider the wording of **Senate Joint Resolution No. 23 Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution Limiting the Use of Moneys Contained in the Special Transportation Fund**. Proper wording and passage would ensure that funds originally designed for the support of recreational marine projects in Connecticut do not get lost or misused. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

John S. Johnson  
Vice Chairman- Legislative Affairs

Grant W. Westerson  
President

Linda A. Kowalski  
The Kowalski Group